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expelling four diplomats from
Ghana.

ABC WORLD NEWS TONIGHT
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U. S.-Libyan Relations

RICHARD THRELKELD: Relations between the United States and Libya are never good, and they could get worse soon. As ABC's John McWethy reports, there's disturbing new evidence that Libya has acquired advanced Soviet weaponry, possibly to settle an old score with the United States.

JOHN MCWETHY: Four years ago, American fighter planes from the Aircraft Carrier Nimitz were purposely flying over disputed waters off the coast of Libya. They were attacked by two Libyan interceptors, and the American F-14's shot down the attackers. Libya's Muammar Qaddafi vowed at the time to get even, and now he may have found a way.

U. S. intelligence sources tell ABC News that two Soviet ships are unloading new long-range SA-5 anti-aircraft missiles, launchers, radar and transporters in the Libyan port of Misurata, enough equipment, analysts say, to set up two anti-aircraft sites with six launchers per site.

The SA-5, with a range of nearly 200 miles and closing speed of three times the speed of sound, could provide Qaddafi, for the first time, with an effective weapon to challenge American planes flying over the contested waters of the Gulf of Sidra. The U. S. Navy is overdue for a major exercise in the Gulf of Sidra as part of the State Department's effort to regularly challenge Libya's unrecognized territorial claims.

Not only is the U. S. watching Libyan ports, but there is continuing concern about Libya's border with Egypt, where both countries have fortified their positions in the days just after the hijacking in Malta; a hijacking Egypt claims Libya master-minded.

Though Libya and Egypt have now moved additional men and tanks near the border, both sides are keeping their forces some 15 miles back from the actual line, an apparent effort to avoid making mistakes. American analysts view this border situation as little more than muscle flexing between two combatants who have no intention of actually throwing a punch.

John McWethy, ABC News, the State Department.
